

Press Release

For immediate release

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SALINA SYMPHONY AND KWU TO PRESENT FAIRY TALE OPERA, "HANSEL AND GRETEL"

Oct. 14, 2010, SALINA, KAN.— The Salina Symphony and Kansas Wesleyan University will bring the fairy tale opera, "Hansel and Gretel," to life on the Stiefel Theatre stage Nov. 12 & 13. The 6th annual fully staged opera production will showcase talent from Kansas Wesleyan University as well as young dancers from the Salina community.

Based on the popular Grimm brothers fairy tale, the opera was originally composed by Engelbert Humperdinck, with the text (libretto) written by his sister, Adelheid Wette. When "Hansel and Gretel" premiered in 1893, Richard Strauss praised it as "a masterpiece." It became an instant success and continues to delight audiences of all ages.

The opera will be produced under the artistic direction of Maestro Ken Hakoda, Barbara Marshall, Leslie Mangrum, Richard Esvang, Peggy Simms and Bill Weaver. The part of Gretel will be sung by KWU junior, Aine Hakamatsuka. Hansel will be played by Rachel August, a junior at KWU. According to Leslie Mangrum, KWU assistant professor of music, the part is known as a "pants role" and is always sung by a mezzo soprano. The witch will be played by Michelle Mead Esvang of Salina.

The production is sponsored in part by the Stiefel Theatre and the Horizons Grants Program of the Salina Arts and Humanities. Funding for the Horizons Grants Program is provided by Horizons, a private donor group, and the City of Salina.

Single admission is \$18 for adults and \$10 for students. Tickets may be purchased at the Stiefel Theatre Box Office, by calling 785-827-1998 or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

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